COMIC SHOP NEWS™

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* Savage Dragon™ & ©1998 Erik Larsen, ARR.

Dragon the Line

So if the book's called ***Savage Dragon***, where's the star?

That's a question that Erik Larsen hears a lot, but he's not willing to giveaway the answer. Yes, the Savage Dragon has disappeared from his own book, replaced by the very pulchritudinous (hey, what do you expect—it's an Erik Larsen comic!) She-Dragon. And if that isn't enough, there's a New Dragon in town as well. But what about the old guy? Will he be returning to his book in the near future? "No comment," Erik Larsen said. Larsen is convinced that the mystery is missing from many of today's comics because the fan-oriented press "gives away too much as it is."

While Larsen isn't saying very much about the Dragon's future, Image is dropping a few more hints, pointing out that, in ***Savage Dragon #57***, slated for January release, "soon all of the mystery behind the Dragon's resurrection will be cleared up." But is it the real Dragon, or is it a duplicate? Again, Larsen's not saying... but he promises that fans will like what they find in the next few issues.

If you miss the original Dragon, though, Larsen has a perfect solution: ***Savage Dragon Archives***, a four-issue limited series that reprints all the pre-Image Dragon appearances. "I've been working toward having the stories that I drew years ago, which are being collected as ***Savage Dragon Archives***, worked into actual continuity. In doing that, I'll have to move all the characters into place to accomplish this—and it will take some doing because the Dragon as seen in those stories is in a *much* different place than he is in the comics currently."

But will the original Dragon come back? Will the She-Dragon hang around? What about the New Dragon? "No comment," Larsen repeated, adding, "I will tell you that the murderer is the butler and that 'Rosebud' is the name of the sled, however."

Larsen also continues to work on the ***Dragon/Superman*** team-up book (or two) being produced in conjunction with DC, adding that they're "in the works, but nothing definite has been nailed down to a specific month at this point."

You'll see the New Dragon and the She-Dragon in action in ***Savage Dragon #55***, where the duo confront the forces of evil that threaten the Windy City in Dragon's absence. If that's not enough, William Johnson's evil brother makes his presence known as he kidnaps Rita Medermade, forcing a Dragonesque rescue in ***Savage Dragon #56***. And then there's that mysterious "resurrection" in ***Savage Dragon #57***, on sale in January.

So that means that the Dragon is coming back, right?

"No comment," Larsen says again—and it's obvious that he's a little pleased with the fact that there's at least *one* secret in the comic book field that won't be given away until the book hits the stands...

by CLIFF BIGGERS

A Hit and Mix Situation

Marvel's history is well known to comic fans—and it's readily available in a variety of reprint volumes. But Marvel isn't interested in just re-presenting their history in ***Marvel Remix***; instead, they want to reinterpret that history through new points of view, making readers view landmark moments in the Marvelverse through new eyes.

Marvel Remix: Fantastic Four is the first in a series of Marvel Remix books that are in the works; this three-issue miniseries focuses on the first meeting between the Inhumans and the Fantastic Four, from way back in ***Fantastic Four #s 44-46***—but this time, the focus is on the romantic sparks that fly between Johnny Storm and Crystal. Think Romeo and Juliet bombarded by cosmic rays and exposed to mutagenic potions... but without the tragic endings.

This miniseries is written by Gerard Jones, who joins artists Jeff Johnson and Mark Pennington to kick off this unusual new look at Marvel's heritage. Other Remix tales are in the works from other creators, however; future characters destined for Remix treatment include Spider-Man, the Avengers, Dr. Doom, Nick Fury, the Silver Surfer, the Punisher, and Daredevil, to name a few. Future Remix projects may be one-shots, miniseries, or multi-chapter books focusing on different storylines, depending on what each plot requires.

Marvel Remix #1, a 40-page $2.99 comic that kicks off the three-issue limited series, is scheduled for November 25th release.

by WAYNE LEE

Elastic Archives

He was the first stretchable hero, long before Mr. Fantastic or Elastic Lad or Elongated Man. If there's a stretchable gimmick that could be imagined, his creator not only thought about it, but found a way to work it into a comic book. He's Plastic Man, Jack Cole's springy superstar, and he's not only back in the pages of the ***JLA***, he's also back in his very own Archives edition, reprinting twenty tales that very few of today's fans have ever seen.

Plastic Man Archives reprints the seminal Plas tales from ***Police Comics #s 1-20***, beginning with the offbeat transformation of Eel O'Brien into Plastic Man. Joined by his less-than-brilliant sidekick "Woozy" Winks, O'Brien makes up for his criminal past by combating crime in his new identity.

Just how important is Plastic Man in comic book history? Here are a pair of clues: comics legend Will Eisner, creator of the Spirit, has written the foreword for this edition (and if anyone should know about Cole, it's Eisner, since the two worked together in the 40s), while another legend—Alex Toth, whose work is all too rarely seen nowadays—has created the cover art for this compilation. And you know that any book that can elicit contributions from both Eisner and Toth has to be a special volume indeed! Comics historian Peter L. Myer supplies the introduction, putting Cole's contribution to comics history in perspective.

Plastic Man Archives Volume One, a 224-page hardcover priced at $49.95, is scheduled for December 16th release.

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From Your Friendly Neighborhood Comics Outlet

Printed on Recycled Newsprint

CSNsider

A Word from MC2's Emcee: *Tom DeFalco* recently gave ***CSNsider*** a call to chat about upcoming MC2 events. "I'm just amazed," DeFalco said, "at how strong the positive response has been for these books. We weren't sure if we were doing something that would appeal to the direct market, but we knew that we were having fun with it. It looks like the direct market likes it as much as we do," DeFalco said—and it appears he's right, what with ***Spider-Girl #0*** already in a second printing and ***Spider-Girl #1*** the object of such strong demand that a reprint in some form is almost a certainty.

"We'll definitely be doing a fourth book," DeFalco said in response to questions about the chances of a new title being added. "We were talking about adding a new book in '99, and I suggested that maybe we should consider letting readers decide what the next book should be. The marketing department thought that was a great idea, so that's what we're doing in January. We're introducing three new characters that month, but fans won't just choose from those three—they'll get to choose from every character who's guest-starred in the MC2 books. So if they want Darkdevil, or the Fantastic Five, then that's what we'll do."

DeFalco also talked about future plans for the MC2 books. "We're doing a group of stories that we're tentatively calling 'Secrets Revealed' in February; each book will reveal a previously unknown, major secret

about one of the book's characters." DeFalco wouldn't reveal any of those secrets to ***CSNsider***, although he did promise that "these will be some pretty big secrets, stuff that readers will want to know."

Further down the line, DeFalco revealed that a ***Spider-Girl Annual*** is also in the works. "We decided that we definitely wanted to do a Spider-Girl meets Spider-Man storyline, so that's what we're doing—but we haven't decided if we want to set it in the past or the present, or what. We came up with four ideas—I really like two of them, but they're not quite zippy enough yet, so we're working on them.

"*Paul Ryan* is drawing a backup story; it's a goofy seven-page backup that makes fun of a comic book tradition. In annuals, it's common for a hero to confront every villain they've ever fought, so May's going to face off against all of her enemies... only she's doing it in a basketball game! Hey, I said it was goofy!..."

While Marvel is leaning towards making the annual a 48-page book to keep the price down, DeFalco is hoping he can talk them into "upping the ante," so to speak. "I'd love to do a sixty-four page—or even an eighty page—annual, if we can talk them into it. Then we could throw in everybody—not just Spider-Girl, but A-Next and J2, too."

As to the rumors that made the rounds not too long ago that ***J2*** was on the cancellation list, DeFalco said, "Marvel can't figure out what to do with these books. They're not following the normal sales trends—in fact, they're not even really sure what the first two issues have sold yet, since they had to dip into books they had set aside for bagged book sales to fill the reorders. Right now, J2 is the lowest selling of the three, but it's still doing pretty well, and it's a really offbeat book that's just hitting its stride, so I hope they give it a chance."

DeFalco also tells fans who have been so supportive of the early MC2 books that "I think you'll really like what's coming up. I was talking with some of the artists, and they agree with me that we really begin to hit our stride with the third issues. So if you liked the first two, you should love what we have in store!"

Mo' Mona: Want an anthology book with enough room for creators to really tell a story? Then ***Mona***, the new book debuting in January from Kitchen Sink, is what you're looking for: its ninety-six pages offer such creators as *Jaime Hernandez*, *Lorenzo Mattotti*, *Matthew Guest*, and *Tom Hart* plenty of "elbow room." There's also a real treat to be found in the first issue: Kitchen Sink has found some *Harvey Kurtzman* strips never before published in English, and they're making them available here for the first time! "***Mona #1*** redefines comics anthologies for the 1990s and set the mark for the next millennium," *Jamie Riehle* of KSP said. "This is a debut not to be missed!"

Warrior Nun Cuts Up with Razor: *Ben Dunn* returned to his creation Warrior Nun Areala in November—and in January, his involvement with Areala jumps to the next level when he writes and illustrates ***Warrior Nun Areala/Razor: Revenge!***, a black and white one-shot that brings together Areala and the edged-weapon-wielding London Night Studios heroine. "Something has invaded a small town and is kidnapping its citizens," *Matthew High* of Antarctic explained. "Areala is sent to investigate the disappearance of the local priest and uncover what sinister forces may have been unleashed. Meanwhile, Razor is drawn to the town because of a promise she made to a friend many years ago. Once she is there, she must confront a dark side of her past that could drive her to the brink—and take Areala with her!" The book will be offered in a standard edition and a 3500-copy alternate-cover version.

Rock & Roll Revision: *Jay Allen Sanford*, publisher of Re-Visionary Press, recently dropped ***CSNsider*** a note to update us on the company's rock and roll comics line, which has been quite active—even though they haven't "produced any new mass market r 'n' r comics since 1994." According to Sanford, plans are underway to release a few new products in early 199. "Our eight-issue ***Beatles Experience*** will soon be available as a trade paperback... Included will be the unpublished ***Paul McCartney Annual***, which was originally supposed to be released in August 1994 (Revolutionary ceased publication in June of that year). That unpublished annual also included a feature on Badfinger, one of my all-time favorite bands [and a perpetual favorite among ***CSN*** staffers]. Unfortunately, that story was only partially drawn and will not likely ever be printed. I do have material in the archives, as well as a painted cover by *Ken Meyer Jr.* which includes a Badfinger portrait." Sanford also adds that, while his company hasn't issued any new titles in quite a while, they "sold over 10,000 *David Bowie* and *Kate Bush* comics to two distributors in England this year," proving that there's still quite a market for rock-related comics.

Re-Vamp: *Seth Biederman* of Harris Comics recently filled ***CSNsider*** in on some changes to the ***Vampirella*** line-up. The monthly title will take a month off in December, to be followed in January by ***Vampirella Monthly #0***, a split Vampi/Pantha book that features a ten page story starring each heroine. *Steven Grant* and *David Conway* handle the writing honors, while *Patrick Zircher* and *Mike Mayhew* supply the artwork. According to Biederman, "The Vampirella story is a bridge between ***Vampirella #12*** (the climax to Hell on Earth) and our upcoming ***Vampirella/Lady Death*** crossover with Chaos! Comics in February 1999. The #0 story is a prelude to ***Vampi/Lady Death***, and Lady Death will be appearing in ***Monthly #0*** in a short sequence.

"The Vampi tale is written by *Steven Grant*, who's been working with *Morrison & Millar* on the ***Vampirella Monthly*** series for quite some time. The Vampi story artist is *Patrick Zircher*, he's new to ***Vampirella***, but he has done a number of issues of ***Iron Man*** (both the Busiek regular series, and the ***Iron Man: the Iron Age*** miniseries).

"The Pantha story is the beginning of our plans for Pantha in '99—she's to be featured prominently in the ***Vampirella Monthly*** series. This is the first published comic story by *David Conway*, who is new to the comics field and comes highly recommended to us by *Grant Morrison*. The art for this tale is by *Mike Mayhew*, again new to Harris Comics, but he's done great work on ***Lady Rawhide*** and ***Starman*** recently.

"***Vampirella Monthly #0*** will be equally distributed with both a ***Vampirella Monthly #0*** cover by *Louis Small, Jr.* and a ***Pantha #0*** cover by *Gary Frank*. There will also be variant covers of ***Vampirella Monthly #0*** by *Patrick Zircher*, and a variant edition cover of ***Pantha #0*** by *Mark Texeira*.."

But what about this ***Vampirella/Lady Death*** crossover? "All I can say on ***Vampirella/Lady Death*** right now is.... ***Vampirella/Lady Death*** to be published by Harris Comics, ***Lady Death/Vampirella*** to be published by Chaos Comics —both released in Feb. '99 with a Valentine's Day theme," Biederman said. "Our creative team: *Steven Grant & David Conway*, writers; *Louis Small Jr*, artist. The ***Vampirella/Lady Death*** crossover tale will be in continuity. The lead-in prelude to the crossover is ***Vampirella Monthly #0***, and the events of ***Vampi/Lady Death*** will influence ***Vampirella #13***."

All-Starr Comics: You've read the Kenneth Starr report online, you've bought it in paperback form, you've heard the tapes... but now you get to see the comic book version of the romance of the 90s. *James Kochalka* and *Tom Hart* are supplying the visuals for ***Monica's Story***, Alternative Comics' "adaptation" of the document that chronicled the ill-fated love that has dominated the news for the past nine months. So who's writing the adaptation? He (or she) ain't tellin'—which is why it's credited to "Anonymous."

If you're looking for prurient material, look elsewhere: no one is going to ever accuse the quirky, cartoony Kochalka-Hart art of being sexy. However, it is a lot of fun. "As a mass of raw data, the ***Starr Report*** is bleak and impersonal," said Alternative Comics publisher *Jeff Mason*. "These guys have turned it into something dramatic and rather touching."

"Readers will find themselves sympathizing with a couple of char-

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acters they thought they had run out of all sympathy for," said Mason, "in contrast with most 'pulled-from-the-headlines' comics that play up the sleaze and go for a photorealistic look, ***Monica's Story*** is a bold, refreshingly honest read."

"I flesh out the dialogue to make it sound more natural," said the critically-acclaimed comics writer who's going *Anonymous* for ***Monica's Story,*** "but other than that it remains absolutely faithful to the Report. It's just a matter of selecting the crucial sequences and crafting them into a flowing, engaging romance. I don't take a satirical tone... the thing is hilarious already, so a deadpan, unironic presentation works best." ***Monica's Story*** is scheduled for January '99 release.

Barry Windsor-Smith's Monstrous Plans: As *CSNsider* told you a few weeks ago, *Barry Windsor-Smith* is working on a massive graphic novel, ***The Monster,*** that's slated to appear from Vertigo in 1999. "It started out in 1984 as Barry's 22-page fill-in story to explain the Hulk's violent behavior as an outgrowth of Banner's being abused by his father as a child," Windsor-Smith's Studio Manager*Alex Bialy* explained. "*Jim Shooter* refused to publish it based on the fact that the father, Tom Banner, said the word 'Goddamn.' Shooter then allowed *Bill Mantlo* to rip off Barry's original concept and plot (very poorly), and the resultant story became a fundamental part of the Hulk's origin from then on.

"The original 22-page story has now grown to more than 250 pages, and the creature that was originally the Hulk has changed and become less of the focal point of the story as the child's mother and father and a host of new characters have added whole new dimensions. The story now touches on the more universal theme of the propagation of profound evil, as Nazi experiments directed at creating a super race have insidious effects on the lives of two American families over the span of subsequent decades.

"Barry is writing, drawing and inking the entire project, employing his evolving naturalistic style of storytelling. It will be published by Vertigo in 1999 as a hardbound black and white graphic novel. ***The Monster*** is being done in a very detailed, intense crosshatch line style. While there is no graytone work of the kinds you mentioned, I'd say this technique has as quite a tonal effect for its being strictly line work"

That's not the only project in the works for DC. Windsor-Smith is also working on a "Superman book entitled ***An Evening With Superman.*** This will be something more that your run-of-the-mill superhero story. This book recounts the first meeting between Lois Lane and Superman in the first weeks after he has arrived in Metropolis. It is the story of how Lois fell in love with Superman.

"Again, it is in Barry's naturalistic, sophisticated style. There is no flying, no punching, no cliché superhero stuff. This is a very human, real story about an important event in the history of two of America's great icons. As far as what motivated Barry to do a Superman tale, it was an idea that evolved sort of on its own, with the challenge being to tell the story in a real, human way that will appeal to non-comics readers as well as comics fans. The format for this project will be a special 12 x 12 " book of around 120 pages. The target for publication is sometime in 2000."

This Star's Expanding: When *James Owen* reissues his early issues of ***Starchild*** through his Coppervale Press imprint, he won't be just reprinting old material; instead, he'll be offering a new book that should appeal to those who have already discovered the wonder of ***Starchild*** as well as fans who have heard of the series but The new reprints are ninety-six pages," Owen told ***CSNsider,*** "and each will reprint three issues from the original twelve issue run of ***Starchild.*** Additionally, they will have new painted covers, and each will have around twenty-four pages of additional material—unused pages, character designs, layouts, and all of the original covers. The books (four of them, in all) will be squarebound and have a cover price of just $4.95." So what led him to such a major undertaking at such a bargain price? As Owen explained it, "That ***House of Mystery*** reprint [a ninety-six page compilation released by Vertigo earlier this year] was quite an inspiration!"

If you're looking for an easy entry point into the whole ***Starchild*** saga, Owen has something that's designed for just that purpose. "***Starchild: TwoPenny Serenade*** is a sixteen-page comic with an all new cover and twelve-page story; it will be in print forever as an easy intro to ***Starchild,*** and it will retail for only a buck."

"The premiere issue of ***International Studio,*** out at Halloween, will have a three-page preview of the ***Starchild*** spinoff ***Fool's Hollow***—a squarebound, forty-eight page all-ages book out in time for Christmas.

"***Tales from the TwoPenny Inn*** will resume monthly publication with #3 in late January.

"***Starchild:Mythopolis*** will resume publication in the original bimonthly twenty-four page format, at a retail of $2.95, sometime in February."

Bendis's Criminal Pursuits: *Brian Bendis,* best known for his acclaimed Jinx series, has been tapped by Todd McFarlane to helm a major new ***Spawn*** spinoff title. "I will be writing and laying out a new monthly crime series for *Todd McFarlane* called ***Sam and Twitch,*** based on the cops from ***Spawn.*** This will be a cool cinematic noir series, and I am picking the artist now. we already have short list of people I admire." According to Bendis, fans should expect to see the first issue "mid-1999. "It's a crime comic; it's going to be very dark, but very snazzy. Todd set the characters up nice for me; I'm going to flesh them out with a little ***Serpico,*** a little ***Godfather,*** a little ***Homicide...*** high cop drama in extreme circumstances—and I have a lot of cop drama waiting to burst out of me, so I'm glad to have the outlet."

There's no doubt that ***Spawn*** fans will enjoy the series, but Bendis is optimistic that the book's appeal will reach out to fans who don't normally read Spawn. "I think ***Jinx*** fans will like this as well. Now, on top of ***Torso*** and the trades, there will be a monthly Bendis-y crime comic...and the only criticism I ever get from fans is the bi-monthly schedule I'm on. The first story is *big*—a big story for a big comic. And the characters will come out of it changed..."

And speaking of ***Torso,*** Bendis mentioned that "***Torso #2*** will ship a week or two late due to a death in my immediate family. Many have asked what's up with my scheduling of late; just trust me that I have a good excuse."

This is one of several Spawn spin-off projects in the works for 1999; other books include ***Spawn: The Dark Ages,*** a ***Medieval Spawn*** title by *Brian Holguin* and *Liam Sharp,* and a ***Cy-Gor*** series (writer and artist as yet unnamed). These books will replace ***Curse of Spawn,*** which is being taken off the schedule to make room for the new titles.

Oktomica in Wonderland: Oktomica Press's publisher *Casey Lau* has clued ***CSNsider*** in on the publisher's second series, ***The Wonderlanders.*** The series by *Casey Lau, Tom & Mary Bierbaum, and Kaare Andrews* reveals "what happens when fairy tales grow up."

"You remember the stories like ***Alice in Wonderland*** and ***The Narnia Chronicles,*** that you read or were read to you when you were young? Well I always wondered what happened to the kids that participated in those adventures if they grew up today," Casey Lau said..

"We've created a new world that mixes up all you remember, with some new ideas to create a new 'wonderland' called Flynn. A Great War happened there 20 years ago, where four school kids helped stop the evil wolf-prince Fenris from taking over King Layoran's kingdom... they lived happily ever after...until now!" Fenris has escaped and fled to earth, where he attracts the attention of Elizabeth Gable, the now-grown-up eldest of the schoolkids who must help recapture Fenris.

The Wonderlanders #1, a full-digital-color book that kicks off the monthly series, is slated for January '99 release.

Creator Updates: *Louise Simonson*'s new ***Silver Surfer*** series, which will feature painted art by *Jon J Muth,* is tentatively entitled ***Silver Surfer/Galactus.*** The book will focus on the reasons that Galactus needs a herald like the Surfer—and why the universe needs a Galactus... ***Max Velocity,*** described by creator *Jack Snider* as "sort of a tribute to *Wally Wood,*" makes his premiere appearance in ***August #2,*** on sale at about the time you read this—but in February, he'll be featured in his own solo tale in ***Arrow Spotlight.*** "This looks like it could fit into EC Comics," ***August*** creator *Scott Rosema* said... *David Mack* and *Rick Mays* are working on a new miniseries, ***Scarab,*** a ***Kabuki*** spinoff that will focus on the other Noh operatives, Scarab and Tigerlily. "the story explores Scarab's relationship with Tigerlily and chronicles her youth in Japan's gang subculture," Mack said... *Karl Kesel* has signed an exclusive contract with DC; he will continue to work on ***Superboy,*** as well as the new ***World's Finest*** maxiseries... ***Paul Kupperberg,*** editor of ***Impulse*** and ***Flash,*** is leaving those books to take on special projects for DC... *Scott Lobdell* is writing ***The Darkness/Batman*** for DC, one of two crossover books featuring WildStorm and DC characters (the other is ***JLA/Witchblade***); the book, tentatively slated for March '99 release, will be illustrated by *Marc Silvestri* and *David Finch*..

Assaying the JSA: *David Goyer* recently announced over on AOL that March's fifth-week JSA event will feature a pair of bookend titles by *James Robinson* and Goyer focusing on the JSA, as well as seven tie-in titles including ***Starman & The Atom; Hourman & Dr. Mid-Nite; Wonder Woman and Hawkgirl; Flash & Mr. Terrific; Wildcat & Hawkman; Green Lantern & Johnny Thunder;*** and ***Sandman & Sandy.***

Upcoming Comics–Image in January:

Automaton, the sf miniseries by R.A. Jones and Peter Vale, will be collected in trade paperback form in early '99; the 72-page book tells the story of NASA astro-bots that are taken over by alien intelligence that drives one of them mad.

Did you miss out on ***Darkminds'*** early issues? Fret not—Image is taking care of you with ***The Darkminds Collection Volume One,*** a compilation that reprints the first three issues of the series by *Adrian Tsang, Pat Lee, Alvin Lee,* and *Alan Tam.*

The Deception, a new series written by *Bill Spangler,* is the story of Jordan Risk, superstar magician who becomes involved in a mission of international intrigue and adventure. Image advises, think "James Bond meets David Copperfield."

Spawn tries to overcome his personal moment of doubt—but that doesn't do very much for Cogliostro, who could use Spawn's help when he finds himself at the wrong end of a very strange "hunting party" in ***Spawn #82.***

Mark Paniccia's making waves in ***Tsunami Girl,*** the story of an urban underground DJ who finds herself caught up in the middle of a surreal black market deal gone wrong.

Upcoming Comics–Marvel in January: You demanded it, so it's happening at last: The Beast returns to the Avengers in ***Avengers #14.*** But is it a permanent return, or just a visit? Find out in January!

Get ready for more time-travelling fun in ***Avengers Forever #4,*** which will be offered with four different variant covers by *Carlos Pacheco & George Pérez; John Buscema & Tom Palmer; Jeff Smith* (yep, the ***Bone*** guy!); and *Frank Quitely.*

Earth X is officially introduced in ***Earth X #0,*** written by *Alex Ross* and *Jim Krueger* and illustrated by *John Paul Leon* and *Bill Reinhold.* This is the 48-page no-ads "origin issue" that paves the way for the Earth X maxiseries that begins next month, revealing the radical changes that the Marvelverse undergoes thirty years in the future.

It's Earth versus Attilan in ***Inhumans #5,*** courtesy of *Paul Jenkins* and *Jae Lee.* The first shots have been fired, and it's now up to Black Bolt and his advisors to decide what the Inhuman response will be.

Meet the alterniverse's Spider-Man in ***Mutant X #6,*** written by *Howard Mackie* (Spidey's scribe) and illustrated by *Tom Raney* and *Andrew Pepoy.*

Marvel begins their annual season early with ***Thor 1999,*** a *Dan Jurgens/Klaus Janson* extravaganza that revealed what happened to Thor between the end of ***Heroes Return*** and the beginning of ***Avengers #1.***

Marvel's trade paperback releases in January include ***Spider-Girl*** reprinting the first two sold-out issues, and ***Daredevil,*** reprinting the first three issues of the *Kevin Smith-Joe Quesada-Jimmy Palmiotti* hit series.

Magneto is back—and he ain't that wimpy Magneto who got on everyone's nerves a while back. No, this is the nasty guy himself, as the title—The Magneto War—might indicate. *Alan Davis* is the writer of this story arc, which begins with the bookend ***X-Men: The Magneto War #1*** and continues into ***Uncanny X-Men #366, X-Men #86, Uncanny X-Men #387,*** and ***X-Men #87.***

QUICKSHOTS

Giving the Devil His Due

Which Daredevil is your favorite—the original yellow and red costume, or the more familiar red costume with black highlights? Veteran fans have fond memories of the original fighting togs, so aptly illustrated by such luminaries as Bill Everett, Joe Orlando, and Wally Wood—but most younger fans only know the more familiar red-suited 'Devil. Well, thanks to Randy Bowen and the folks at Bowen Designs, you don't have to choose one or the other—'cause you can have 'em both!

The ***Daredevil Statue,*** a fully painted cold-cast ceramic statue sculpted by Bowen and based on designs by Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti, is being offered in both the classic and the new costume versions. If you're interested in the original costume, though, you'd better act fast, since Bowen is only manufacturing this statue to fill initial orders... which means that there'll be no second chance. As for the red and black costume... well, you have a little more leeway there, since there'll be 4000 copies of that stunning sculpture made. Our advice, though, is that whichever Daredevil you want, you should reserve a copy at your local comic shop ASAP—and tell 'em that *CSN* sent you!...s

The Unending War

Dark Horse has offered scores of ***Star Wars*** miniseries, one-shots, graphic story albums, trade paperbacks, and hardcovers during the past few years, but one thing has been missing: a monthly ***Star Wars*** series. That won't be the case for very long, though, now that Dark Horse has announced plans for an ongoing Star Wars monthly title set in the Star Wars Universe of the upcoming film.

"Lucasfilm is excited about the launch of the ***Star Wars*** monthly," Lucy Autrey Wilson, Director of Publishing at Lucas Licensing, said. "This Star Wars comic represents the first ongoing sequential storyline which will be published on a monthly schedule. Set a generation before ***Star Wars: A New Hope,*** this new story should satisfy the most discerning fans while offering an accessible way for new readers to join the fun."

Star Wars' first story arc will focus on Jedi Ki-Adi-Mundi, who makes his home on the peaceful low-tech world of Cerea. His idyllic existence is about to be threatened, though, because visitors from the Republic are eager to negotiate a trade deal with the Cereans in order to gain access to a powerfully intoxicating plant which is highly sought after all over the galaxy. Now it's up to Ki-Al-Mundi to convince the Cereans that the lure of big money and high technology should be resisted... because once the Republic sets up operations on Cerea, life will never be the same.

Star Wars is written by Jan Strnad, with art by Anthony Winn and Robert Jones. "We're tremendously excited to have Jan Strand writing this series," editor Peet Janes said. "Not only is he well-versed in the ***Star Wars*** universe and the kind of tales that are best suited to the comics medium, but he's also a great writer in general. And matching him up with penciller Anthony Winn, whose recent projects include ***Wolverine*** and ***Alpha Flight***, was a risky proposition that paid off dearly. This is going to be one fine project."

So will readers find clues to the storylines of the upcoming ***Star Wars*** film in the pages of this comic, which is set at approximately the same time as the next movie? Neither Dark Horse nor Lucasfilm is answering that, but it is certainly significant that this ongoing series is set at the same time as the new film, rather than during the time of Luke, Leia, and Han.

Star Wars #1, a $2.50 comic, is scheduled for December 2nd release.

Who's on Faust?

Remember ***Faust,*** the controversial, hard-edged, no-holds-barred creation of David Quinn and Tim Vigil? A few years ago, Faust pushed the edge of ultra-violence with its brutal visuals and its shocking storylines. It's been a few years since Faust made his last comic book appearance, though—but that doesn't mean that Faust is gone forever. Quite the contrary, Faust is about to make his comic book return in a five-issue story arc that brings together Faust and Quinn & Vigil's latest creation, 777.

Faust/777: The Wrath #0, sets a new female Faust (yes, Faust is a woman!) on the trail of the trio of characters whose storyline was the focus of 777. But it's not a friendly meeting... in fact, Faust is hunting the Undying Wrath, the Angel of Destruction and the Violence Extremist. The zero issue is a special standalone prequel that leads into the four-issue miniseries—but anyone who's a Quinn and Vigil fan won't be satisfied with just one issue, that's for sure!

"Just as ***Faust*** did a decade ago, ***777: The Wrath*** has broken new ground for the independent comics scene," Avatar Press Editor-in-Chief William A. Christensen said. "777 proves once again that a quality indy can have an impact—and yes, sales —that surpasses what many Big Three titles can aspire to." The book will serve as a sequel to ***777: The Wrath*** and a prequel to the new Faust series, ***Faust: Love of the Damned.***

Faust/777: The Wrath #0, a $3.00 comic, is scheduled for December release from Avatar Press. A wraparound cover version is also available for $3.95, and a deluxe limited edition leather-covered version is offered for $25.00.

Fans Are A-Gog at This Statue

Until now, DC offered two sizes of statues: the large 10"-12" statues and the very small 5" figures. But sometimes fans want something not quite that big—but not quite that little, either.

And that's why DC has created their medium statue line, which begins in December with a ***Kingdom: Gog Medium Statue.*** Based on Jerry Ordway's Gog designs (and who should know Gog better, since Ordway first illustrated the villain in ***New Year's Evil: Gog***), the statue stands 7.5" tall, approximately halfway between the price of the small and large statues. And at a price of $79.95, this is a statue that every fan should be able to afford (and of course, it's a wonderful item to add to your holiday gift list!).

The Kingdom: Gog Medium Statue, a limited edition fully painted cold cast porcelain figure, is scheduled for December 16th release—which means it'll be in comic shops at the same time as ***The Kingdom #1,*** the book that reveals Gog's malevolent plan to set the events of ***Kingdom Come*** in action even earlier than they initially occurred.

CSN GAMING NEWS

The Games People Play

• To Boldly Go there Once Again...

The world of *Star Trek* is one of the most explored and defined universes in the history of the science-fiction genre—but that doesn't mean that you won't find more material coming out. Component Games is about to release a new set of *Star Trek* board games that are sure to please not only *Star Trek* fans, but also strategy board game fans everywhere.

Star Trek: The Next Generation Board Game and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Board Game* are new games that use a unique component system developed by Component Games that utilizes a series of interconnecting hexes with different aspects to each piece, combined with playing pieces, dice and cards that make this a game that is never the same twice. In the *Star Trek: The Next Generation Board Game* The Federation, Klingons, and Romulans fight it out for control of the galaxy, while The Cardassians and The Bajorans are included in the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Board Game.*

Each game includes four control sheets, twenty-one map pieces, fifty playing cards, a rulebook, three dice, and over eighty tokens. In addition, both games can be combined to create a larger game that help to fill out the *Star Trek* universe. Best of all, *The Star Trek Component Games* are fully compatible with the other games in the series, such as the *Babylon 5 Component Game,* letting you pit the Klingons against the Narn, and may the best lumpy head win. *Star Trek: The Next Generation Board Game* and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Board Game* are due out in November for the suggested retail price of $39.95 each.

If you would rather see your *Star Trek* game stacked in your favor, then you will want to keep your eyes open for the new *Star Trek: DS9 Dominion Booster Pack* also due out in November. One of the most dangerous foes that has ever been introduced to the Star Trek canon is brought into the collectible card game from Decipher as The Dominion makes its way into the Alpha Quadrant from the Delta Quadrant in a big way.

This expansion will include sixteen special common cards that are designed to be added to decks to make them playable right out of a standard *DS9* starter box. You will also find new cards and details on Changelings, the Jem Hadar, and many other interesting characters from the Delta Quadrant. Fans of the series—not to mention the hard-core collectors—should be keeping their eyes open for the new USS Defiant card; this card is a special insert that is twice as hard to find as the standard rare cards, and is randomly inserted into packs in place of the rare. Look for the *Star Trek: DS9 Dominion Booster Packs* to hit stores this November. Each pack will contain twelve cards and carry the suggested retail price of $2.50.

• The Return of a Killer Game

You better start watching you back, and paying closer attention when you open any doors, because you never know who might be out to get you. *Killer, Fourth Edition,* that fun game of friendly assassination is back, and any one of your friends might want you dead. This controversial release from Steve Jackson Games has players using squirt guns in place of pistols, water balloons in place of bombs, and your imagination in place of murderous actions.

The idea of the game is for each player to take on the role of an assassin, plotting the death of the other players. Simple enough—just remember to keep the game friendly, okay? The last player left "alive" is the winner, and then all the other players can kill the winner for taking their lives—or something like that. In any case, this latest edition of the game includes new art and new, improved ways to "kill" your friends. Look for *Killer, Fourth Edition* to hit..or maybe I should say arrive... in stores this November.

If you like your games a little more magical, and a lot less lethal, then be sure to check out *Authentic Thaumaturgy.* This new release is less of a game supplement than it is a study in magic, looking at the various views of magic and its place in our own world. *Authentic Thaumaturgy* was written by professional occultist P.E.I. Bonewits, the only person ever to receive a degree in Magic from the University of California. Bonewits looks at the concepts of "real magic," and extends them into role-playing scenarios, giving gamemasters plenty of ideas and directions for their own campaign.

Authentic Thaumaturgy isn't designed for any one game, but rather is planned as an informative and inspirational resource—not to mention being a whole lot of fun to read. Look for *Authentic Thaumaturgy* to arrive in stores this November.

• Red Skies at Night...and Day...and All Other Times

This isn't exactly flying the friendly skies. *Crimson Skies* is the new boxed game from FASA that looks at life in an alternate twentieth century, one that didn't work out quite as nicely as this one. In this alternate reality, The United States doesn't quite live up to its name, and is instead a group of smaller countries, each vying for power against the other. As a result, you have a series of countries that aren't very safe to cross, even from above. You get to create and control aircraft that attempt to haul passengers and cargo across the continent, while attempting to fight off pirates with privateers that you have hired for safety's sake.

Crimson Skies is a boxed game that comes complete with everything that you need to begin playing with a fast and simple system. Each player gets to design their own planes and dirigibles that suit their own style, each represented by unique figures that are included in the boxed set. Look for *Crimson Skies* to hit the stores in November for the suggested retail price of $35.00.

• Everybody Must Get Stone

One of the top artists in the fantasy field is combining talents with some of the top authors in the field and some of the best game designers in the industry to present a new role-playing experience. *Sovereign Stone* is the brainchild of artist Larry Elmore, who told his idea to writers Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman, who then took the idea and began running. Now, you can look for new fiction from Weis and Hickman to launch this world this Spring with the book *Lord of Sorrows.* Shortly thereafter, you can look for the new role-playing game designed by Lester Smith and Don Perrin, with a little help from the likes of Jeff Grubb, Doug Niles, David "Zeb" Cook, and others. *Sovereign Stone* looks to be a big release for 1999, and *CSN* will keep you up to date with all the details.

• Werewolf? There Wolf.

The hit *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* role-playing game has been optioned by ASC Games and Epic Megagames for a new computer game being developed by DreamForge Entertainment. The game will use the *Unreal* game engine moving between first and third person viewpoints. The game itself will focus on a young man named Ryan McCullough, who is just discovering his own Garou heritage—and it isn't that pretty. It seems that the tribe of werewolves that he has descended from has been taken over by the Wyrm, the dark spirit that is corrupting the world. Now, you must take the path of your family, helping to destroy the world, or defy them and save the world from an almost assured apocalypse. No release date has been set for this game, but *CSN* will keep you up on the latest happenings both on screen and off for the Werewolf world.

•Ch-Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes

Last month *CSN* reported that *Changeling* and *Wraith* were being discontinued from White Wolf. Since then, it has been announced that *Changeling* and *Werewolf: The Wild West* will become a part of the new ArtHaus line of products that will be produced in a different style from the rest of the White Wolf line.

Also, as a part of the Year of the Reckoning story for 1999, another *World of Darkness* game setting will undergo a dramatic change that will result in the creation of a new core game and setting. There is no news as to which line will be affected, but since there was no announcement as to the fate of *Wraith*...well, as soon as we find out, we will be sure to report that one to you as well.

One last bit of White Wolf news. The official name of the latest edition of the *Vampire* game is: *Vampire: The Masquerade Revised Edition.* White Wolf also informs *CSN* that they will be dropping the "Revised" part soon, making the game simply, *Vampire: The Masquerade.* Hope that clears up some confusion.

Chaos Gets in the Holiday Spirit

When you hear the word "spirit" used in reference to Chaos! Comics, you don't exactly think about the holiday spirit—but the Chaos! gang is so moved by the holidays that they've created their own holiday event for December release. "Chaos! readers are among the most turned on, dedicated, hard-core, and just plain cool readers out there," publisher Brian Pulido said. "How could we let the holiday season flash by without giving them a party?"

David Quinn, who's writing three of the four holiday-themed books, thinks of it as more of a gift. "These are the comics that you will want to share with your friends and family who don't read comics," Quinn said, but you know they would like them if they tried. Call it a Dark Gift from your comrades at Chaos! in the war against illiteracy.

"I want everyone who *reads* to read comics. Travelling the US and Europe pretty aggressively in the last two years, I have heard comic aficionados scream for stories they can share with their friends who aren't hip to comics. These stories have to be an invitation to read comics—that means that they need to be clear, complete in one issue, and the writing and illustration has to be state-of-the-art, simply our best. And they have to be about something that people care about, something we all feel and relate to.

"Well, I *wasn't* going to be subtle. I picked the most primal, simply the strong emotional hook I know—Christmas, Hannukah, the Winter Solstice. *Everyone* I know comes together with loved ones and lights candles against the darkness that's sure to come... our Winter Holidays."

Of course, we're talking Chaos! here, so you know better than to expect a traditional warm-and-fuzzy holiday celebration. What Chaos! delivers is "Unholy Nights, four standalone storylines with a holiday theme, including:

•*Purgatori #4:* this issue's story, "Satrina," reunites the vampire with a long-lost old lover. While mortals celebrate their beliefs on the longest night of the year, Purgatori comes to terms with her own beliefs.. and what's most important to her

•*Evil Ernie #7:* "Christmas Evil" focuses on Evil Ernie's Christmas Present to himself—a nightmare of an urban warrior road trip. But it's his Christmas Past that may make the difference in his life, as a very important person from Ernest Fairchild's past makes a guest appearance.

•*Lady Death #12:* "The Life of Death on Earth" forces Lady Death to confront Death as she has never confronted it before; the experience forces her to explore the feelings behind humankind's spiritual holidays.

•*Smiley Anti-Holiday Special:* the psychotic button outdoes the Grinch as he turns Christmas upside down.

"We're delivering the goods in Christmas," Brian Pulido said. "The 'Unholy Nights' issues are a must for readers of Chaos!, new readers who relate to holiday themes, and anyone who wants to get a look at the state of the art comics for the next century..."

Each of the four "Unholy Nights" books is priced at $2.95; look for 'em in early and mid-December.

CSN TOYMANIA

BY ERIC G. MYERS & JEFF COPE

Drac's Back

Glenn Greenberg, author of the recent Dracula: Lord of the Undead limited series from Marvel, is optimistic that the most famous of all vampires will arise again as a comic book star in 1999.

"The intention of the ***Dracula: Lord of the Undead*** is to re-establish Dracula as a lead character, since he hasn't been the subject of a Marvel comic in a long time," writer Glenn Greenberg said, "and essentially reintroduce him to readers... The focus is much more on Dracula, with new supporting characters."

As Greenberg sees it, Dracula " started out as just a classic literary villain, a symbol of evil in a Gothic horror novel. But then he became a symbol of the massive influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe into England, with values and social mores quite different from those of 'proper English society.' Later he became a symbol for the dangers of sex. He gains even more of a profound relevance now, in this age of AIDS. "

While it's too early to tell if response to the first miniseries is enough to support a Dracula return, Greenberg did say that "I have some ideas kicking around that I'd love to explore in a follow-up series. My preference would be to relaunch as a regular ongoing monthly—but these days, that doesn't seem feasible. I'll take what I can get, though, so if Marvel greenlights another ***Dracula*** limited series, I'd be more than happy to write it! My biggest hope is that Pat [Olliffe] would be available to do it with me again."

Any chance that Dracula will cross paths with his former nemesis, Blade, in the near future? "I suspect it's inevitable," Greenberg said. "Maybe in a follow-up limited series, assuming we do one. If we were doing a regular ongoing monthly, I'd say, 'Most definitely,' because I think it would be absolutely necessary for them to cross paths in the context of an ongoing ***Dracula*** series."

A Weighty Subject

Okay, the look may seem a little bit familiar to anyone who ever saw Dave Stevens' ***Rocketeer***—but remember, Stevens was harkening back to the glory days of 1930s pulps and 1940s film serials when he borrowed that distinctive look for his jet-powered hero. And Steve Vrattos, Keith Martin, and Rober Quijano are just as fond of that era—in fact, their new book, ***Captain Gravity,*** is set right in the middle of 1940s Hollywood!

Captain Gravity is a rollicking adventure title that reinterprets 1940's serials with a 1990's eye and a delightfully retro art style. The story focuses on Joshua Jones, a young man living in Hollywood in the 40's... a young man whose life is about to be turned upside down when he takes on the guise of Captain Gravity.

Captain Gravity #1, a 36-page full-color $2.75 comic from Penny Farthing Press, is scheduled for mid-December release.

Resaurus Is Far from Extinct

Columbus, Ohio toymaker ReSaurus is coming on strong for the end of the year and into 1999. ReSaurus made its debut on the scene with ***Duke Nukem*** and now a second series of the Duke figures is available including a new Duke, and alien creatures such as Battlelord, Pig Cop and the ultra-cool Octabrain. Continuing in this vein, ReSaurus is producing figures based on the ***Quake*** video game. The first assortment features a male and female marine, the Iron Maiden, and the enormous Tank. ReSaurus hopes to have these out by the end of the year.

A real treat is the planned release of an action figure line based on the classic animated series, ***Speed Racer.*** Two assortments are already in the works. The first series will include Speed Racer, Pops Racer, Trixie and Captain Terror. The second series may include such figures another Speed, Racer X, and Inspector Detector. There are also plans for a Mach 5 vehicle with special bonus figures. The first assortment of this line should be available early in 1999.

Jeff Smith's ***Bone*** has its own line from ReSaurus ready to hit stores in the next few weeks. All your favorite Bone characters are represented including several versions of Bone and the stupid, stupid Rat creature. Look for exclusive variants of ***Bone*** in ***Previews*** and ***ToyFare*** in the next several months to complement this line.

Tony Daniel's creator owned comic ***The Tenth,*** published by Image Comics, will become a full fledged toy line in 1999. ReSaurus, who has been turning out cool product after cool product, has acquired the license and is in the early planning stages of development. The team at ReSaurus has yet to finalize the entire line-up but it seems certain that the Tenth and Esperanza will be the core of the first assortment.

And finally, ReSaurus has announced its ***Magic: The Gathering*** line for 1999. A prototype of the Minotaur figure was on display at the Comic-Con International in San Diego this year. Other figures for this line are still being discussed, but you can be sure that there is no shortage of source material within the ***Magic*** universe. Look for the first assortment early in 1999.

McFarlane Ventures McFurther into Toys

McFarlane Toys has decided to make the leap into the direct market for its popular action figures and toys. Three new licenses have been announced that will give McFarlane Toys a visible presence in comic and hobby shops in 1999. This new venue will allow McFarlane Toys to explore licenses that might not have broad crossover appeal or toys that would be more appropriate for an adult audience.

First up comes Marv from Frank Miller's gritty urban drama, ***Sin City.*** The figure will be done in gray tones to reflect the black and white comic that gave birth to the character. Of course, there will be on element of color: blood red. Look for a blood-splattered Marv to come with such features as an interchangeable hand.

Female figures will be very well represented in McFarlane's new direct market program. Both J.Scott Campbell's ***Danger Girl*** and Joseph Michael Linsner's ***Dawn*** are slated to get McFarlane's signature action figure treatment. Look for all these figures in your local comic or specialty store beginning in 1999.

The Moore, The Merrier

Moore Action Collectibles' President and CEO Clayburn Moore announced that the ***FAKK2*** action figure line will consist of 2 versions of Julie as FAKK2, Lord Tyler and Carrie. This line is scheduled to be released with the animated movie.

Based upon the six inch sculptures by Clayburn Moore, Moore Action has announced the first in a series of twelve inch action figure dolls! Coming in November is Lady Death from Brian Pulido's Chaos! Comics!, based on drawings by Steven Hughes. You thought she was beautiful as a 6-inch action figure, but imagine owning her in 12 glorious inches! The 12" Lady Death figure comes in a special collector's packaging and retails for $24.95. More information will follow on the rest of the series.

M.A.C. is also scheduled to release a line of four action figures based on the television series ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer,*** early in 1999. Regarding the characters, "They are being designed now and sometime in the next few weeks, we will be able to release which characters will be included in the line," comments Michele Bryant Moore Action Collectibles' Director of Marketing/Licensing.

Moore Creations has developed an Action Figure Display Base in honor of M.A.C.'s first year of history in the making. Standing 10" tall fully painted and assembled, it will hold 8 to 12 of your favorite M.A.C. figures.

"We have received numerous calls, letters, and e-mails from fans requesting a display base for figures. It is very exciting to once again deliver what our fans want," comments Michele Bryant Moore Action Collectibles' Director of Marketing/Licensing. The Action Figure Display Base will be released this Fall at a retail price of $85.00.

Hot Toys at Antarctic

Is your Cheetah action figure getting lonely? Well, fear not! Fans of Fred Perry's popular Gold Digger comic have something to look forward to in 1999, Cheetah's partner in adventure Gina Diggers, will become an action figure early next year courtesy of Antarctic Press.

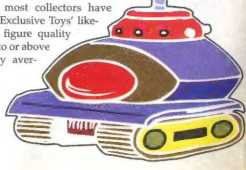
Dark Horse Turns Another Page

First came Ghost, then Martha Washington. Next up to get the action figure treatment from Dark Horse Comics is the iconic '50s pinup queen Bettie Page. Bettie has become something of a legend in the comics industry and has provided the visual inspiration for characters from ***The Rocketeer*** to ***Batman: The Animated Series,*** as well as her own Dark Horse comic book. This latest additions to Dark Horse's fledgling toy line is bound (no pun intended) to make a lot of fans very happy!

For more information and photos of many of the items mentioned here, be sure to visit the Raving Toy Maniac on-line at http://www.toymania.com. RTM is your best source for all the up to date information on toys and action figures.

ToyNooz Update:

The family of the late Jackie Gleason has filed suit against Exclusive Toy Products, claiming that Exclusive's line of Honeymooners figures is "substandard, of poor quality, and demeaning to the individuals they depict." The dispute asks for a financial settlement and a discontinuation of the current line. This is odd, since most collectors have considered Exclusive Toys' likenesses and figure quality to be equal to or above the industry average...



SPECIAL FEATURE

Rumor: *I was told by a friend that Barry Windsor-Smith had taken his Storyteller series to DC, where he'll be finishing it up. True?*

Rumor Control: Nope, but we can see how this one got started. Barry Windsor-Smith is working on two high-profile projects for DC, *The Monster* and *An Evening With Superman* (see this week's *CSNsider* for more info). He is also talking with a publisher about wrapping up the *Barry Windsor-Smith: Storyteller* series—but it's *not* DC. Who is it? We're not saying yet, because the negotiations are still underway and we don't want to do anything that might prevent the final issues of that delightful series from appearing.

Rumor: *I heard that Joey Cavalieri had left the editorship of the Superman books. Anything to that report?*

Rumor Control: It is indeed true. Insiders at DC tell us that Cavalieri has left the Superman books to pursue "more upscale projects"; Eddie Berganza will be taking over the Superman books. Does that mean more changes in his editorial workload? Don't know the answer to that one yet—but when we find out, we'll let you know here!

Rumor: *I saw a new issue of X-Files recently. I heard that this was an indication that Topps had decided to continue their comic book line after all.*

Rumor Control: Afraid not, based on what freelancers at Topps had told us. The recently- released *X-Files* was an issue that had already been paid for, so the company stood to make more money from publishing it than from not publishing it. But we're told that no new comics material is being produced for Topps, and while a few companies are initiating low-key queries about rights for the *X-Files* comics, there's little hope that the book will be moving to a new publishing house any time soon.

Rumor: *Should we take Marvel's recent business dealings—along with the fact that you haven't mentioned the Marvel Handbook in months—to mean that the Handbook project has been cancelled?*

Rumor Control: "Quite the opposite," editor Tom Brevoort said. As for when the series will debut, Brevoort added, "Hasn't been decided yet. Heck, even the eventual format's back up for grabs!"

Rumor: *I hear that Wolverine's getting his adamantium back—is that true?*

Rumor Control: We asked Erik Larsen, the writer who'll be taking over *Wolverine* this month, and here's what he had to say. "The powers that be at Marvel want this to happen. I want it to happen. They want it to be a 'big story' and I'd like that as well. As for if we can agree on what that story might include and how it will come together—I dunno. I expect it will come together in the upcoming year." That sounds about as close as we're going to get to a "yes" right now!

Rumor: *I heard that Dark Horse's new Star Wars series was going to feature the characters from the next Star Wars film. True?*

Rumor Control: Good question... and one we can't answer absolutely, positively, with certainty. Dark Horse is confirming that they're setting the new series in the earlier *Star Wars* world that's the setting for *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* (yeah, we know that it's an awful name for the film, but that's what we're stuck with right now), but they're not saying anything about the possibility that the comic book will feature characters from the film.

Since it's set at the same time as *Phantom Menace*, it's pretty much definite that, at some point, the comic book will feature some of the characters from the film... but we can't say whether Ki-Adi-Mundi, the star of the first story arc in *Star Wars #1*, is one of those characters. From what we're told, though, if he is a character in the film, he's not a major one. But then, if he was, would they tell us?... *sigh* That's the problem with this rumor biz...

Rumor: *I heard that the reason there wasn't an Avengers comic to tie in with the Warner Bros. film was that Marvel threatened to sue anyone who did an Avengers comic. Is that true?*

Rumor Control: I'd prefer to think that anyone who considered doing an *Avengers* comic based on the film changed their minds after seeing that wretched movie... but the truth is, there's no problems inherent in doing a comic book based on the series, but the publisher can't call it *The Avengers*. The last time someone did such a book, they called it *Steed and Peel*, which would likely be the name of the comic if it did happen... but judging from the awful response to the first film, it doesn't look likely.

Rumor: *Was the anti-Semitic reference in Wolverine #131 intentional? I had heard that the writer was trying to show that one of the characters was anti-Semitic.*

Rumor Control: Absolutely *not true!* Todd DeZago filled Rumor Control in on what happened. "I wrote only the plot to *Wolverine #131;* the script was written by Bryan Vaughn, who wrote "the *assassin* known as Sabretooth". Mark [editor Mark Powers], feeling it necessary to change script and dialogue , changed this to "the *killer* known as Sabretooth," which somehow got lettered as "the *kite* known as Sabretooth" and because *Wolverine* was running very late, it got through to the printer."

DeZago was unaware of the initial controversy due to a computer problem that kept him out of touch for a few days. "I didn't hear about this til the day after the books hit the stores!" He stressed again, though, that "it definitely wasn't in anything that Bryan or I wrote! Marvel issued a press release exonerating the two of us, saying that neither of us were responsible, but I never saw it in any papers... I hope that everyone realizes that it was a typographical error." And he's right in that regard—most papers ran the story about the anti-Semitic reference, but hardly any of the major media outlets reported that it was a typographical error and not an intentional inclusion. Now you know the the real story, though...

Rumor: *I've heard that Dark Horse has big plans for Lost in Space, Starship Troopers, and Indiana Jones in 1999. Is that true?*

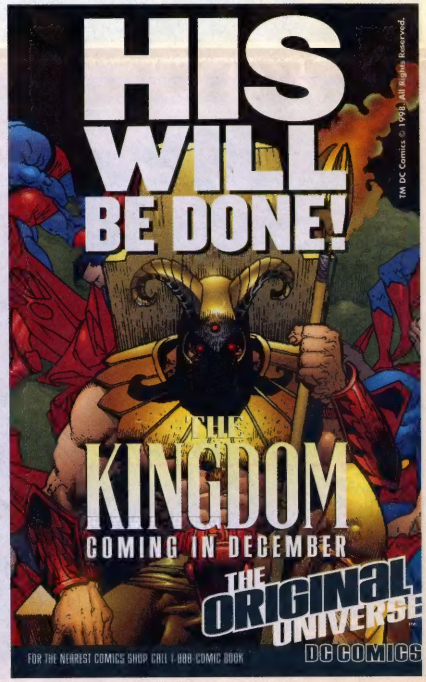
Rumor Control: "I'm glad somebody's putting those rumors to bed," Dark Horse's Randy Stradley told *Rumor Control*. "Nope. No plans for any of those series."

Rumor: Will Jim Lee take over *Legion of Super-Heroes* or Mark Waid *Superman*? They both said they were real interested, and it would be great and make the books sell a million copies.

Rumor Control: Patricia Jeres of DC gave us the answer to a fan's question... although it doesn't sound like the answer he was looking for. "Jim Lee will not be 'taking over' any DCU characters. He may choose to work on some DCU characters on the future, but he would do so in consultation with the respective DC editor.

"As for Mark taking over the *Superman* books, the ongoing *Superman* titles are in an editorial transition right now *[check out the first part of this Rumor Control column for more information on that]*. Eddie Berganza, who's coming onto the books, hasn't has the time to evaluate them yet. So no truth to the Mark Waid rumor."

by CLIFF BIGGERS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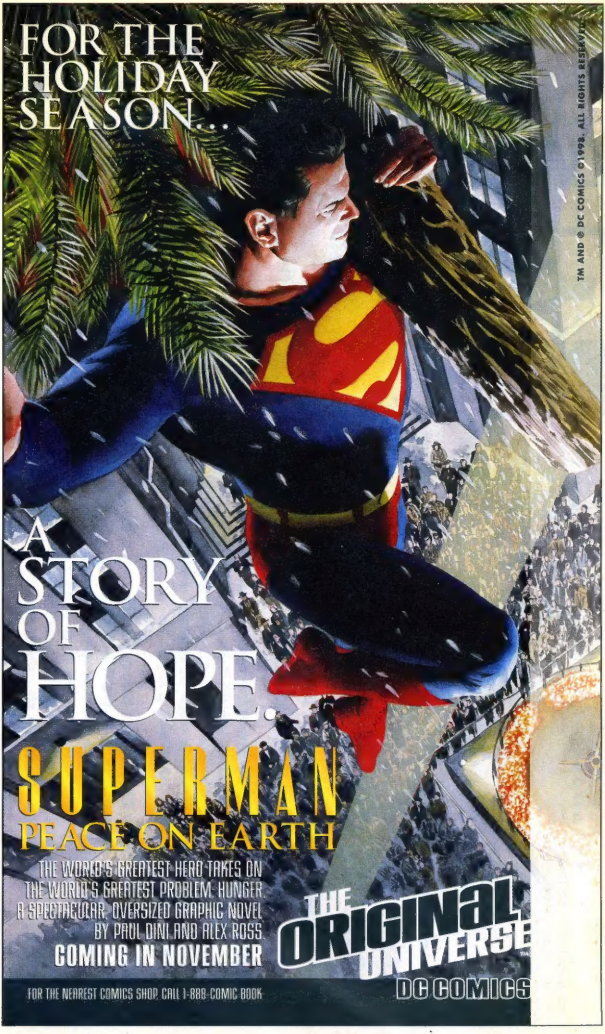
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